

Hatley Parish Council

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Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Hatley Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th April 2018

In attendance: Cllr M Eagle (Chair), Cllr A Pinney (Vice Chair), Cllr N Jenkins, Cllr H Nickerson, Clerk to the Council K Wilde and 9 members of the public.

1. An apology of absence was received from Cllr M Astor, District and County Cllr S Kindersley and District Cllr B Smith.
2. Interests or dispensation applications: Cllr Jenkins declared a personal interest for agenda item 4. ii. as an immediate neighbour to the proposed planning development.
3. Questions from the public: An elector invited the Parish Council to write to thank UK Power Networks for promptly raising the low-lying cable above the Village Hall but the Council declined the opportunity to do so. An elector expressed his upset regarding damage caused to the flowers and vegetable patch in his garden by the hunt's hounds passing through the parish on two separate occasions. The elector was concerned that the hounds are uncontrollable and pose a risk to pets and local wildlife as well as causing damage when running amok through gardens. The Chair suggested that the elector speaks directly to the Master of the Hunt to address his concerns but in reply the Chair was advised that when members of the hunt had been approached they had said that the hounds are only following a scent and cannot be controlled. The elector requested that the Council raises this issue with the Master of the Hunt. The Chair agreed to make contact with the Master of the Hunt and will update the Council at the next meeting.
4. Planning:
 - i. Application S/1083/18/VC – Variation of Condition 4 (Aerotows) 5 (Flying activities) 6 (Self launching sailplanes) 7 (Hours of Operation) 8 (Aerotowing Equipment) of Planning permission S/0607/90/F – Use as Gliding Club and ancillary purposes – Cambridge Gliding Club, Gransden Lodge Airfield, Little Gransden

The proposed changes were summarised by the Clerk with an explanation of Cambridge Gliding Club's reasoning and intentions. The Chair invited comments from residents who were present. It was agreed that current activity already generates enough noise disturbance and that any proposals that would lead to an increase in non-winch activity would only add to the amount of noise suffered by residents. It was noted by an elector that the request to remove restrictions has possibly been driven by a breakdown in processes between the Gliding Club and South Cambs District Council's Planning Department, which is not a valid planning reason to remove any conditions.

The Parish Council supported the view of the residents and resolved to object to all and any changes to the current planning conditions. The Parish Council objected for the following reasons:

- The current planning conditions were imposed by SCDC in 1990 (S/0607/90/F) for reasons which are still relevant today: **'to protect the amenities of the area and of local residents'**. There can be no justification for the removal of conditions which were

implemented to protect residents in this rural area from unnecessary and unwanted levels of noise disturbance and nuisance.

- The Gliding Club is proposing an unlimited number of flights by aerotows and now also self-launching sailplanes (SLS's), which could result in the doubling of the number of flights on days when the conditions are favourable. This significant increase in powered activity at the Gliding Club would result in an unbearable increase in noise disturbance for residents in Hatley and the many other rural parishes that border the Gliding Club. The removal of this restriction cannot be supported. The current condition which limits the Club to 40 aerotow flights per day is considered to be a suitable limit which should neither be amended upwards nor removed. Winches can be used as an alternative and much quieter option.
- The proposed extension of operating hours for aerotow flights and now also SLS flights would not only result in a significant increase in the frequency of noise disturbances but also, more importantly, result in additional noise pollution during the hours when more residents are likely to be in their homes and gardens, i.e. outside the normal working day. The Parish Council considers the intentions of the Club to make more flights across much longer days a very unneighbourly request and strongly objects to any changes in the current flight period of 9 am to 6 pm. Residents of Hatley and the surrounding parishes should be able to enjoy their outside space, especially during weekends and evenings in the summer months, without the annoyance and disturbance caused by the sound of the aerotow and SLS. If restrictions on the flight times and flight numbers were to be removed, it is likely that the bulk of new activity would greatly impact residents who wish to relax and enjoy some quiet time in their gardens at the weekends and evenings.
- Hatley suffers from a good deal of noise disturbance from air traffic which comes from all sides of the Parish and therefore the Parish Council objects to any increase in permitted flight activity from the Gliding Club. There are two additional airfields in very close proximity to Hatley's Parish boundary, namely Fullers Hill and Top Farm. Furthermore, there are many other flights passing over Hatley from the airfields at Old Warden and Duxford, plus routine flyovers by loud low-flying military aeroplanes and helicopters. The last 20 years has seen a drastic increase in the volume of commercial flights stacking over Hatley as they approach Luton and Stansted airports. Helicopters that pass over the area regularly also seem to be noisier and are flying much lower than they used to. Therefore, since the Parish of Hatley already suffers much noise pollution from air traffic, a request to increase the number of recreational flights without restrictions is very unreasonable.
- The flight path map illustrates a take-off path to the east of East Hatley. However the Parish Council is aware that tow planes often fly much closer to and at times directly over Hatley St. George and East Hatley.
- The Parish Council acknowledges that improvements in technology may have resulted in quieter tow planes and SLS's. However, there is no suggestion that the Club has any measures to restrict the use of older aircraft by its members, providing they do not exceed the statutory noise limits.
- The Parish Council acknowledged that SCDC's Environmental Health experts surveyed noise levels in May 2017 and considered them to be acceptable. However, SCDC must consider Hatley's rural backdrop and the very low levels of ambient noise wanted and

appreciated by many of our residents. What may seem to the local authority to be a 'reasonable' level of noise may be a very annoying and disturbing noise level to others, especially when it is heard repeatedly throughout the day over long periods and possibly on consecutive days too. Residents in Hatley experience a very noticeable increase in the noise level when the aerotow turns to make the return journey to the Club, possibly as quickly and directly as it can. The Parish Council questioned whether the noise level was surveyed at this point in the journey, once the glider has been released. The Parish of Hatley enjoys very low ambient noise which makes the sound of the tow plane even more noticeable than it might seem in busier areas and in locations also subjected to noise pollution from other sources such as road and rail traffic and industrial activity.

- The Parish Council objects strongly to the introduction of self-launching sailplanes by the Club. It recognises that they can be a quieter solution to aerotows but they still make considerable noise and the introduction of this type of aircraft would impact the amount of noise nuisance suffered by residents in Hatley and the surrounding area. The Club has not proposed any restrictions on either the flight times or the number of flights by SLS's and, once again, this is considered to be an unreasonable proposition. SLS's have the ability to switch the engine on and off at any time and any number of times during flight, as deemed necessary by the pilot. The Club cannot guarantee that this switching action would not be taken by any individual pilot at any time and therefore there is a very real risk that residents would have to suffer this extra new annoying noise.
- The Parish Council noted that whilst gliders and SLS's may be comparably quieter than the wide range of aircraft that fly over and near the Parish, these are not 'passing' traffic like the other aircraft. As recreational or training flights the gliders and SLS's remain in the area for longer periods of time and can therefore create more of a nuisance than other passing air traffic.
- The Parish Council did not consider itself to have the technical know-how to respond to the proposal to switch from a measure of 250 Horsepower with silencers and four bladed propellers to a measure of 70 dB(A) for aerotows. However, it was agreed that since all the proposed changes would result in an increase in the amount of noise this proposal should also be opposed.
- Historical meeting minutes for Hatley Parish Council give evidence that the topic of annoying aircraft noise from the Club's activities has regularly been raised at meetings, with residents having been encouraged to address their complaints directly to the Club. It was also noted that in May 1996 Hatley Parish Council requested that the Club should consider giving the local area a total break of one week from towing gliders after its annual competition week. The fact that no response has ever been received to this request contradicts the Club's view that it is a good neighbour.
- The Parish Council noted that noise pollution remains an important material planning consideration and features in the Local Plan that is due to be implemented. Therefore, the Parish Council urges SCDC to consider the true impact on the quality of life for residents in the District if the number of flights were to be allowed to increase and recommends objection to all the proposed planning variations. If the Planning Officer should approve the application, the Parish Council requests that this case to be referred to the Planning Committee.

ii. Application S/0709/18/FL - 2 Storey Front and Side Extensions to 51 East Hatley, SG19 3JA

The Chair noted the proposed changes to plans compared to the previous application S/3875/17/FL with the upper storey of the proposed extension being further away from 49 East Hatley than before, improving the line of sight and reducing overbearing. The members of the public were invited to comment on the application and the following responses were received:

- One elector expressed concerns about the modifications proposing frosted glass windows at the upper level overlooking 53 East Hatley. These would still have an opening vent that would impact privacy. The close proximity of the side extension to 53 East Hatley, which is proposed as 75 cm from the boundary, also remains an issue and may have a detrimental impact on the roots of the trees alongside the boundary fence of 53 East Hatley. Other issues argued previously, such as loss of line of sight, traffic and road safety, have not been addressed.
- A second elector was concerned that the existing situation drawing KC/AJD/01 is not accurate. It shows the existing roof as having two different levels whereas, in fact, it only has one level. (The proposed situation drawing KC/AJD/03a shows the roof as having three different levels.) The applicant was present at the meeting and confirmed he had not noted this discrepancy and would investigate. This raised questions over the accuracy of all the plans.
- A third elector shared the concerns already raised and acknowledged the amendments to the first-floor plans but felt that the extension would still be too close to 49 East Hatley and therefore would still block the line of sight and result in a loss of light. The elector was also concerned about the impact on the appearance of the six houses (41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51 East Hatley) which are identical from the street view but this comment was not supported by Parish Council members who spoke, because East Hatley has a very wide range of property design. The elector stated that the 75 cm gap between the boundary and the extension would make a very difficult side entry but the applicant disagreed with this comment. The elector acknowledged that the new location map was an improvement to that included with application S/3875/17/FL but was still inadequate for considering the impact of the extensions. It did not show the existence of the high wall in front of the house. Again, parking and traffic concerns were raised. The applicant said he would look into improving the parking situation, which is not referred to on the plans or application form.

The Parish Council considered the application and acknowledged the applicant's attempt to address some of the previous issues that were raised under application S/3875/17/FL. The Parish Council resolved to object to the current application for the following reasons:

- **Inaccuracy of Submitted Plans**

The plans do not accurately record the property on either the existing or proposed plans. The existing roof is all of one height whereas the plans show two levels and the proposed roof is shown as having three levels. The Parish Council requests that the plans are amended to ensure that the roof heights shown on all the plans are accurate and to ensure that there are no other inaccuracies in the plans which may be misleading in the consideration of this planning application. The Parish Council also requests that the actual height of the roof or roofs for the proposed extensions is confirmed before any decision is taken.

- Overlooking and Loss of Privacy**

The applicant will install frosted glass to the side facing windows in an attempt to address the issue of overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbours. However, as the windows can be opened the issue has not been fully resolved. The Parish Council requests that SCDC considers the impact of the window opening on the privacy of the neighbours. The proposed window facing 53 East Hatley will have sight of all rear windows and the rear garden of this property. The proposed windows facing 49 East Hatley will have sight of a secluded front garden which is enjoyed as a social space by the current occupants during the summer months.

The Parish Council also understands that to comply with planning regulations the opening parts of a side facing window must be greater than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed. It is not clear from the plans that this requirement will be met by any of the side facing windows and therefore it is requested that the measurements are also confirmed.
- Loss of Light and Overshadowing**

The Parish Council recognises that in response to comments and concerns raised during the previous planning application S/3875/17/FL, the applicant has proposed to set the upper-storey of the extension further away from the neighbouring property at 49 East Hatley. The residents remain concerned that the front extension would reduce daylight and sunlight caused by overshadowing at the front of their house and as such the Parish Council requests that the location and aspect of the neighbouring properties are considered in conjunction with the submitted plans before any decision is taken.
- Layout and Density**

The plans show that the front and side extension would only be 75 cms from the boundary shared with 53 East Hatley. The Parish Council remains uncertain as to whether this complies with building regulations and as such requests that this is clarified and addressed, if required, before a decision is taken.
- Highways Safety / Traffic / Parking**

This stretch of road outside 51, 49 and 47 East Hatley already poses problems for residents and road users when vehicles - often those belonging to the residents of 51 East Hatley - are parked on the highway and it can be very difficult to exit driveways of 49 and 47 East Hatley or to pass this location safely. This problem would be exacerbated by the presence of construction vehicles if the development were to proceed. Emergency vehicles, farm vehicles and other large trucks and vans that service the area would struggle to pass without damaging the surrounding verges or their vehicles. It is also possible that vehicles could be completely blocked from passing. The Parish Council therefore requests that the impact on the highway is fully considered and that, if the application is approved, all attempts are made to ensure that the narrow road and verges remain clear of parked construction vehicles to ensure the safe movement of all other road users.

Loss of sight lines

The proposed front extensions would eliminate the existing access of light enjoyed by 53 East Hatley from the clear line of site in front of number 51 and 49 East Hatley.
- Trees and Landscape**

The Parish Council understands that the proposed development would have an impact on the trees growing close to the boundary with and belonging to 53 East Hatley as their roots would be disturbed and damaged by the digging of the foundations. The Parish

Council asks that this impact of the development on the trees is considered before a decision is taken.

- iii. Other Planning to note – None.
- 5. The time and date of the next meeting: **7.00 pm on Tuesday 15th May 2018 - Annual Parish Meeting to be followed immediately by the Annual General Meeting of Hatley Parish Council.**
- 6. The meeting was closed at 8.23 pm.